

APPROVED JUNE 27, 2023

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Zoom Meeting
April 25, 2023

MINUTES

***Pre-Meeting Discussion:** Prior to the start of the full board meeting, the board members had a special discussion with Kirsten Andersen with the Linkages to Learning and Bridge to Wellness programs. Ms. Andersen shared information about both programs and answered questions.

CAB Members in Attendance: Elaine Carballo, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Denise Fredericks, Jeffery Johnson, Danette Lawrence, Pamela Lockett, Evelyn Okutu, Myriam Paul, Claudia Simmons, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAB Members Absent: Lisette Orellana Engel, Will Kenlaw, and Timothy Robinson

CAA Staff: Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Guests: Verna Washington, MCPS Head Start/PreK

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

Consent Agenda

Mike moved to approve the consent agenda. Zelda seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes from the March 28, 2023 CAB meeting; meeting evaluations summary from the March 28, 2023 meeting; Executive Director’s Report; Budget Report; TESS and Navigation Report; VITA Report; Head Start Report; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison’s Report; Office of Intergovernmental Relations GA 23 End of Session Summary Report; CAB Testimony: County Council FY24 Budget Hearing; Community Needs Assessment Summary Slides; and Strategic Planning Overview.

Head Start

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the Head Start program. Verna Washington shared a presentation about the Head Start Early Learning Assessment. The assessment periods were in the fall and winter. For three-year-olds, many areas of the assessment saw improvements, including identifying upper case letters, understanding word meanings, and working with peers, while other areas such as identifying lower-case letters, object counting, and writing to convey meaning all decreased during the review period. Of note, the science component was really emphasized this year and the program saw increases in this area. Based on feedback from the CAB last year, there was a special focus on assessing African American male students this year. In many measures, African American male students were outperforming their peers, while in other areas they were behind.

Verna noted that for four-year-olds, the assessment looks at measures for five-year-olds (kindergarten readiness). There were mostly increases in performance between the fall and winter in these measures. For African American males, there were overall positive results. Verna noted that all of the students who were enrolled in the three-year old program the previous year are now enrolled in the four-year old program. All of these children saw increase in outcomes from one year to the next.

The board members asked several questions about the data, including how the pandemic impacted students, how older kids in each level are testing, the idea of creating a long-term hybrid PreK option, and a question about the stories that are used in Head Start/PreK classes. Do these stories reflect the children who are enrolled in the program?

Charlene shared an update on a recent situation where a child was left unsupervised at a bus stop. The incident has been reported to the Head Start Regional Office and will require additional follow-up.

CAB Updates

The EC slate for FY24 was reviewed and added to at the meeting. Board members would vote online following the meeting. The slate included:

Chair: Dr. Jeffery Johnson

Vice Chair: Claudia Simmons

Secretary: Myriam Paul

At-large members: Erika Conner, Denise Fredericks, Evelyn Okutu, and Mike Subin

Board members received an update on the recent meetings with Councilmembers. Members of the board had met with all members of the County Council individually to discuss CAB priorities and agency requests. Dr. Johnson noted that these meetings were helpful – especially for his testimony to the Council at the budget hearing because all of the Councilmembers were already aware of the board's priorities and requests.

Board members received an update on the CAI. Twenty-one participants were going to graduate from the program this year. A graduation ceremony would be held in-person at Bohrer Park on May 23. The graduation takes the place of the regular CAB meeting.

Executive Director's Report

Board members received a detailed written Executive Director's report with updates on the agency's programs and services. Sharon shared an overview of the Community Needs Assessment and the strategic planning process. Mike, Dr. Johnson, Lisa, Denise, Myriam, and Pam all volunteered to serve on a CAB Strategic Planning Committee. The Committee would review the strategic planning documents and have a special session to share input with Sue Myers, a consultant who is leading the strategic planning process.

Contracts

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract partners. Aizat noted that there was a concern from Women Who Care Ministries regarding the fact that the organization received less funding for fiscal year 2024. They are waiting on the final budget before putting forward a request for additional funding from the Council. It was noted that CAB could write a letter of support if such a request is made.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7 pm.